ADDRESSES

by

Mr. G. D. NAIDU,

Mr. LALJI MEHROTRA,

President, Federation of
Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Mr. B. P. AGRAWALLA,

Member

and

Mr. K. NANJUNDIAH

at

"GOPAL BAGH", Avanashi Road,
COIMBATORE

on

26—10—1948

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President of the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce Feted

Coimbatore:

Mr Lalji Mehrotra, President, Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Mr B. P. Agrawalla, President of the Indian Colliery owners' Association and Member of the Executive of the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce, were entertained at a tea party in honour of their visit by Mr G. D. Naidu at "Gopal Bagh", Avanashi Road on 26—10—1948. A distinguished gathering which included Mr R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar, C. S. Rathnasabapathi Mudaliar, T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar, A. T. Krishnasawmi Mudaliar, Karana V. Elliah Chetty, B. A. Padmanaba Iyer, N. Shanmuga Gowder, A. Shanmugham, Veeraraghava Pillai, Venkateswara Iyer, M. S. Manickam, Dr. N. Velappan and others was present. Welcoming the guest Mr G. D. Naidu said:

Friends,

At the outset I thank Mr B. A. Padmanabha Iyer, Secretary of the Coimbatore Chamber of Commerce, for having given us the opportunity of welcoming our Chief Guest of this evening Mr Lalji Mehrotra, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

I like to place certain facts about industries and commerce before Mr Mehrotra so that he may take some efforts for the sake of public benefit. At first I want to present a complaint to you against the Central Government and then I will deal about the drawbacks of the Central Government and how they are neglecting the Chamber of Commerce which is working for the welfare as a heart for any type of Government as in any other country.

Unfortunately, South India has been neglected since a very long time in industry and commerce by the Government and the people as well. In this connection a few people who are connected with industries and commerce and the different chambers of commerce tried to represent their grievances of backwardness in industry and commerce to the Central Government for redress in vain. Of course, a few committees, associations and commissions, or individual officers during their sojourn in South India now and then visited various places as vacation resorts. If they were foreigners, the visits were utilised for meeting their own ends or those of their friends.

The Central Government did not observe the inefficiency and partiality contained in their reports and went through their work on the basis of the reports. As a consequence the Central Government treated South India with indifference. Because of such a kind of bad treatment which has been in vogue for sufficiently a long period, instead of cooperation or unity culminating as one Indian Union, the mentality of separation has shot out from different corners of India. Being subjected to oppression by the late British Government and the present Central Government, South India also has joined hands in laying the foundation for linguistic provincess, of course combined with some other motives also. Seeing this awakening in South India, North Indian people also are retorting with a more indifferent treatment, because alertness in South India will any day be detrimental to their aims.

Though some prominent leaders in high positions are carrying out their duties with no partiality or difference of community or province, others either directly or indirectly, straight to the face or behind the back, are treating South India as though it is a part outside the Indian Union. This is reflected glaringly, as in a mirror, in the activities of the Central Government, not only in appointments and administrative work, but also in the imposition of controls in an indiscriminate manner by their Industries and Commerce Department. Some of these facts were recently mentioned in the assemblies and the Press. I also happened to come across some dealings, in which I clearly saw a kind of preference shown to North India as against South

India in industrial and commercial lines. Though I am against any kind of separation, when, at last, I discovered no way to get rid of this bad mentality prevailing everywhere, I was compelled to side the move for separation in some of my previous speeches, at least for the sake of better administration.

While one section is administering the principles of Union with all vehement propaganda and another section is trying to kick out others, there is no wonder in the creation of parties to be free from those kicks with a desire to divide India in different sections under the guise of communalism, communism, or linguistic provincialism. Though several prominent people are aware of the differential treatment that is going on, no one had courage enough to bring out these facts on the floor of the Assembly. But I am proud to say that our esteemed friend Mr T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar openly brought forth some questions in the assembly recently about the not so good treatment given to the Madrasis at Delhi. Fortunately, the whole portion of his speech was not reproduced in the press. But in South India Mr E. V. Ramaswami Periar and Ex-Premier Sri Prakasam and some other prominent people as well are propagating among the public for separation in the name of Dravidasthan or linguistic provinces. Though such kinds of separations are detrimental to the consummation of one union, the Central Government is functioning with closed eyes like the proverbial cat unaware of what is going around and I won't be surprised if this agitation for separation one day comes true as a hard fact.

Now I want to quote some instances about the relationship between Government, and Industries and Commerce. But I do not want to take much time on these matters explaining elaborately. To prove instances of favouritism etc., I paid a very good amount to get the materials. When I mentioned of these payments to some of my friends in Delhi recently, they remarked "You have paid a very large amount for these materials. You can get any number of such materials for one twentieth of what you paid". In this manner several facts and figures are coming out daily and also published in several papers.

I read recently in a paper, which has got a wide circulation, all over India about an export ramp describing the permits given to four particular concerns only, with the quota of 75% of the export for groundnuts and that too in a short space of time while several applications for licence were received. I also read another news item in the same paper, about an import ramp for a permit of Rs. 70 lakhs to one who has no bank account. A glance of the records kept in the Export and Import Control Department itself can prove how industrialists and merchants are treated very badly by this department. Without some influence it is impossible to get any licence in time; perhaps not a single licence was obtained by anyone without extra efforts.

Allow me to draw your particular attention to one notable instance. Amongst numerous applications made for the past two or three years, with the solitary exception of one application of a company

here (for sterling area), all the other applications of this company were refused under the pretext of some excuse or other, such as want of dollar exchange, lack of facilities or late application. Though these applications were made only for materials or machines either for educational purposes or for testing purposes of Government institute, they were not favoured with the necessary licences. A department in the Madras Government recommended to the Import Trade Controller for the issue of licences as these materials were required for the said Government institute. After all, these materials were intended for imparting Engineering knowledge to students, and by the use of these materials, a colossal waste by wear and tear of machine parts, and abnormal waste of petrol etc. could have been avoided. When this was explained to Professor Humayun Kabir, Joint Educational Adviser to the Government of India who came down here some time back, he said he would recommend for licences for such materials. Recently when I had been to Delhi he rang up to some officers to look into these applications. When I mentioned abruptly and openly as to what was going on in the Import Trade Control Department in getting the licences, the officer there declined to do anything in the matter.

Then I went to another officer, a South Indian, who too declined to interfere. I thought that a South Indian at least would have some sympathy for his provincial Government as other Indians there. When he asked why the Government of Madras was ordering through this company, I convinced him as to how this company supplied to Government at a

cheaper price than other concerns, that is by supplying goods to Government without any profit. Though he saw the letter from the Government of Madras, he enquired "how could a company quote a price less than Bombay or Calcutta firms". Eventually he said he could not believe this and could not do anything then. The materials for which application was made for licence are very valuable materials for the public. For these kind of materials there should not be any kind of restriction or licence, as any amount of such materials is wanted for our country. These materials should be allowed to be imported without difficulty or restriction either. If they are imported abundantly and used here, lakhs and lakhs of dollars and sterling can be saved for capital goods. In this connection I wrote a letter explaining the necessity of the licence which has not been granted on account of some excuse or other. Let me give here the contents of the letter:

IMPORTERS LIMITED,
Importers - Exporters - Manufacturers - Representatives,
COIMBATORE.

REGD. & ACK. DUE.

19th June 1948.

The Chief Controller of Imports, New Delhi.

Sir,

Ref:– Your letter No. Pt. IV Group/2162-C/275-IV 1-48, dated 8–6–1948.

Apart from the applications made by us on 30–1–48, we have applied for several other licences

as well, all of which were refused for some reason or other except one licence applied for United Kingdom.

The reason mentioned is "that with regard to limited imports being permitted and foreign currency considerations, it is regretted that a licence cannot be granted for the current shipping period".

No doubt, all licences were applied for dollar currency. It was mentioned in papers that licences will be granted liberally for Capital goods. The materials applied for by us were capital of capital goods because they are more important than any capital goods for India at present.

When you are giving permits to import petrol and oil and other similar goods from the United States, we cannot uderstand why dollers cannot be sanctioned for these goods. All motor vehicles in India are not run by petrol and oil imported from Burma and Iraq. India is importing major quantity from the United States spending dollars. The import of petrol and oil is not going to be stopped at present.

The materials for which licences were applied in this reference are sets of tools for training students in carburetors and governors to be fitted to vehicles and industrial engines to reduce consumption of petrol, oil and other materials, which are imported from outside. Import of these items means saving of petrol, oil and parts, using them properly. If licence cannot be sanctioned for such important materials we are at a loss to understand, for what more useful purpose licences will be granted.

Perhaps one fourth of the dollars spent for petrol can be saved by using governors for all vehicles in India. When licences are refused to these goods it is surprising to see unimportant articles arriving in India in plenty. Luxury articles may be important to some people but certainly they are not so important as dollar saving Governors.

We very much regret to see the attitude of the Government in this case. We hope the matter will be reconsidered and licence sanctioned for carburetors, garage equipments, governors as well as educational films which will impart knowledge cheaper than any other means adopted by the Government. We are forced to write this as all the licences applied for by us were either refused or dragged on somehow or other for years together.

We are herein again enclosing the papers returned by you with the above referred letter and would request you to kindly grant the licence at an early date.

Yours faithfully,

(Sd) G. D. Naidu.

After this application I went through the statement of licences issued during the week ending 25th of September in which 683 licences have been issued in Delhi Office for various articles, such as printing machines, spirits, motor cars, motor vehicle spare parts, oil, grease, electric door chimes, coffee brewing equipment, domestic appliances, florescent tubes, water cooling plant, wooden blocks,

electric bulbs, refrigerators, caustic soda, lamp block, celluloid sheets, carbon block, plexi-glass, silver coated fabrics and other materials. Of course, some licences have been issued for some important materials such as pencillin, streptomycin, micrometers, X-ray equipment, plywood machinery, some spare parts for industrial machines, allmity guns, compressors, electric motors etc. Amongst these 683 licences, 376 licences for Rs. 3 21,26,275 have been given for U. S. A. Dollars. Out of these 376 licences, except 34, all the other licences have been given to Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi provinces.

The Deputy Chief Controller of Imports in Calcutta in the week ending 25th September, has given 333 licences amongst which 101 for Rs. 2234725 have been issued for Dollar area. Out of these, 6 licences for Rs. 1,45,399 have been given to Madras. The Import Trade Controller of the same place in the same period has given 87 licences of which 15 licences for Rs. 14,97,011 have been issued for Dollar area.

In Bombay in the week ending 25th September, the Deputy Chief Controller of Imports has issued 242 licences of which 64 for Rs. 25,44,329 have been issued for Dollar area. Again in the week ending 9th October, the same officer has issued 334 licences of which 63 licences for Rs. 48,58,518 have been issued for Dollar area. Electric bulbs, torches, camphor-powder, second hand clothing, wireless parts, radio parts, unexposed films, dyes and typewriters are among the various articles for which licences have been issued. Here some licences have been issued also for technical books, catalogues etc.

In Madras the Import Trade Controller in the week ending 2nd October has issued 129 licences for Rs. 1,03,92,113 of which 14 licences for Rs. 69,007 have been issued for dollar area. These 14 licences contain one for gum rosin valued at Rs. 1320, two for milk food valued at Rs. 2,000, one for synthetic essential oil valued at Rs. 500, seven licences for technical and printed books valued at Rs. 61,125, one for double ended spanners valued at Rs. 1042, two for crown corks valued at Rs. 2,220 and one for sewing machine parts valued at Rs. 800, altogether Rs. 69,007. This is the amount allotted for Madras Presidency for Dollar area.

For the Madras Presidency the Import Trade Controller has been kind enough to give 55 licences for Rs. 10028064 amongst 129 to import areca nuts and betel nuts, whereas he has been able to grant Rs. 69,007 only for Dollar area!

Therefore in a week the Dollar Imports allowed are as follows:—

Issuing Officer	Total No. of Licences	Dollar Licences	Dollar in Rupees
New Delhi, Chief Controller of Imports	683	376	3,21,26,275
Calcutta, Dy. Chief Controller of Imports	333	101	22,34,725
Calcutta, Import Trade Controller	87	15	14,97,011
Bombay, Dy. Chief Controller of Imports	242	64	25,44,329
Bombay, for another week	334	63	48,58,518
Madras, Import Trade Controller	129	14	69,007

The total amount for Madras is Rs. 1,03,92,113 in which 55 licences of Rs. 1,00,28,044 value are given for areca and betal nuts.

Here, we can see one more peculiar circumstance in getting the licences. Rally Brothers, Volkart Brothers, Dodge and Seymore, some Albert, Sait and Das companies and some similar companies who have their business in Madras, fortunately have branches in Bombay and Calcutta. For their Madras business they get licences for a large amount because they have branches in Calcutta and Bombay. If any other North Indian firms have got business in Madras they also are getting licenc s easily. Again, any South Indian firm having some connection with North Indian people also get licences. But other honest and innocent dealers in this side of India cannot get licences except by accident or by immoral influence

It is clearly proved from the above that unless somebody has got office at Bombay, Calcutta or Delhi, it is impossible to get licences. They should have influence also. Otherwise how are we to account for the licences given for unimportant articles from dollar area. I do not know how many licences have been refused for important articles up to now. After all, this company applied for one or two lakhs of dollars worth materials for very useful purpose, while, as mentioned above, several lakhs or crores of rupees worth licences have been issued for wanted and unwanted materials in the duration of a week. I think if only the Government has given the power of issuing licences or the power of recommending for

the issue of licences to the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry with a definite allotment of dollars for each area or town, nobody can think of corruption or prejudicial treatment or any other complaint. Nobody is unable to know why the Government is afraid of taking such straightforward step. If the chairman can ask the Government such a question, of course some suitable and nice replies can be prepared and sent!

I know of some instances in this province where some licences were secured by the influence of their past services, or wearing the apparels of a Congressman amounting to a few hundreds or thousands of rupees. But it seems in the Central Government tens of thousands of rupees and in certain cases lakhs of rupees are involved in favouritism.

Very recently additional cement factory licences have been issued with discrimination. Not only in the case of cement factories, but in the case of other industries and controls also, favouritism has been shown. If the Government could only have consulted these chambers they would have been able to guide properly, as members of these institutions have got vast experience of industrialisation. There may be an objection on the ground that only capitalists and business magnates are in the chambers. The Government need not show any favouritism to such capitalists and business magnates. But they can get their rich experience for the sake of the country. I am of the opinion that only the Federation of chambers of commerce can deal with these subjects without fear or favour, and without any motive of

differentiation better than anybody else in the Government. Unless favouritism in industry and business disappears there is no salvation for our country to go forward in the formation of one Union. Unless the Government gives recognition to the ideals of the chambers of commerce it will be guided by other forces to the deep sea. When we observe some recent memorandums and activities of the federation and of the Government, there seems to be no coordination prevailing at all. As mentioned in the memorandum when the Federation addressed the Government for the rectification of the defects in transports almost all the replies came in a negative manner. To their pointing out of the unsatisfactory administration, irresponsible staff, corruption and such other defects, the replies stated that the reasons for the prevalence of defects were blackmarketing, personal gains, deterioration in the standards of civic morality etc. But it seems that the authorities could not take any steps to put down such irregularities. The departments get angry when criticisms come from the Federation or anybody else. Of course, though they are not able to show their capability in the administration, their eloquence in their replies to criticisms is *par excellence* when compared to what you see in the debates or oratorical competitions.

In the drafting of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly, no representation was given for the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, but representations for universities, for literature, arts and science, for engineering, for architecture, and for public administration and social service have been extended. I do not know whether

all the above could thrive without the coordination and support of practical industry and exchange of commerce. By University representation, you can create political colleges; by literature, art and science, you can establish laboratories for making research on the sun and moon; by agriculture you can make agricultural theories; by engineering you can produce theoretical engineers as produced in the existing engineering colleges; and by public administration, you can produce officers to sit and work in air-conditioned rooms or to give very good and convincing lectures on the platforms. With these theoretical productions, is there any chance for the uplift of the masses? The industry alone can help all these branches. They are inseparable; one cannot exist without the other. One is theory and the other is practice. If there is no equal industrial development all the other branches without industrial cooperation are to be termed as uncooked rice or unripened fruits. So it is a foregone conclusion that all the theoretical knowledge without a path for application, viz, "Industry" goes waste and serves no purpose to humanity. All these have been fully and comprehensively explained by our Chief Guest in a memorandum to the President of the Constituent Assembly. But we do not know whether the President will give any recognition to this memorandum for a representation.

Now the Government is going headlong with their one sided policy and this is not the place to mention or criticise as such activities are innumerable. The present attitude of the Government is to strike back, if any section of the public explains the

defects or difficulties faced by them, by saying "don't talk, don't criticise"! In some cases, besides remarking this they ask for constructive ways and means, which means more or less the Government asking the public to accept and advertise as best whatever actions they do. During the last meeting here, one of my friends, who is in Assembly, criticised my speech mentioning that I am always criticising the Government and asked me to give constructive suggestions instead of criticisms. I never criticised. I explained only what the difficulties are and the defects experienced by the actions of the Government. It seems my friend has taken this as criticism instead of taking as an advice in the same way, as government does. There is no wonder.

On the other hand the Government must set up debating societies for the purposes of expressing the pros and cons of their policies and to guide them in a proper way. Instead of being benefitted by such associations the Government is prosecuting journalists, communists and others for exposing the defects of the Government. The politics of the communists may be different and the view of the journalists also may be different from those of the Government. The Government on the contrary, should be thankful to them and try to rectify their drawbacks. In the same way the Federation is also expressing its views after discussing the pros and cons of any subject. Although I am not a communist or a congressite or any party man, I may also be apprehended as a dangerous man and prosecuted for expressing such glaring facts. I have no such fear, as our Prime Minister himself has asked us to bring

to light any defect found in the administration in order to be looked into by the Government.

Recently I told some friends that hereafter I won't say anything about our Madras Government. They asked 'why'.

Till now, in the recent years, I did not go outside Madras Presidency. So far I was asking our Government to take steps to remove illiteracy, black-marketing and inefficiency as I found these defects in this province. Recently I had occasion to visit the capital city of Delhi and saw all these defects higher there than in our province. On my return when I compared the Delhi scene with that of our Madras Government this Government appeared honest and more efficient to my eyes. Hence, while the Central Government is in such a state, it is not right to say anything of our Government here. We have to say that the Madras ministers are more honest than any other ministers in any other province. It is a fact that our officers are more energetic and more efficient than those in other provinces.

The South Indians are cleverer and conserve more energy to do more work, intellectually and physically, than their brethern in other parts of India. Now, we can say for certain that there are 7,000 South Indians in Delhi Secretariat. If they all come out one day to South India, I do not think that the Central Government can function at Delhi.

Unfortunately the Government is nationalising the inefficient people, unproductive industries and

mal-administration. In their eyes the labourers seems to be enemies and at the same time the capitalists also appear as enemies. Meanwhile the representations made by associations such as the Federation of chambers of commerce are also treated inimical. Instead of nationalising such activities, such people and such federations to bring about coordination between labourers and capitalists and between all other groups differing in views, they have adopted steps not conducive to the smooth sailing of the honoured institution, namely Government.

One may ask how to nationalise the different categories, capitalists and labourers. There are ways and means, but the Government in its present mood may think that such ways and means are funny. The only reason for this is ignorance and inability to understand things, as to what are needed and what are not needed, what are suitable and what are not suitable, what are efficient and what are inefficient and what is corruption and what is honesty.

Though all leaders in the top positions wish for the cooperation of the public for pure administration, we see with our own eyes more non-cooperation growing in strength day by day. What is the reason for this? Government can escape easily by saying that public morality is such and therefore they could not do anything as mentioned by them in one of their replies given to the Federation of Chambers of Commerce. In that case, is there no remedy for this?

It is a wonder in an age Pencillin was found out for dreadful diseases and open ways and means are available to cure the diseases of the Government, that the Government cries how to cross these dangers!

Now, if the Government gives ten years rigorous imprisonment or even death sentence with confiscation of wealth for any corruption of any member of the public or of the administrative staff, can anybody say that corruption will again lift its head? If this corruption alone is put down there will not be any famine or any necessity for control and ration. But again a vicious circle will be created, when the Government starts to reduce the expenses. In that case Government will create a field for corruption. Instead of any reduction, Government should pay sufficiently to the staff, promulgate such and such punishment for corruption, and then get advices from public associations such as Chambers of Commerce for guiding the developments of industry, agriculture, commerce etc. Now it is Government's duty to train and teach the public and the staff courage and honesty in everything, as public and staff cannot learn by themselves. First you teach them honesty and expect honest work from them. Public are children of the Government. The duty of the Government is to teach innocent children. One cannot get any benefit from children unless they are taught well. It is a sin for the Government to escape by blaming the public and staff as wanting in morality when they have not taken any steps to impart any morality to them. Until Government adopts this policy we are not supposed to be in

Independent India. However, still we hope that the Government will strive to achieve real independence for our country by proper methods.

Sir, I hope you will not take these matters with any sort of misunderstanding. I request you to observe things in their true perspective and observe the activities of the chambers of commerce here, prepared to cooperate with you. With the cooperation of all the chambers of commerce you will achieve our object from the Government.

I welcome Mr B. P. Agrawalla, Member of the Committee of Federation of Chambers of Commerce representing Mines and President of the Indian Colliery Owners Association, who has been kind enough to join us today. I thank from my heart of hearts both Mr Mehrotra and Mr Agrawalla for the opportunity they have given us to hear their advices.

I thank all friends who have honoured me by attending this meeting in response to my invitation.

Mr LALJI MEHROTRA

Mr Naidu and Friends,

When I started on this tour, I came with the hope that I will not be swept by any enlightenment, but I shall be recipient of the same. I find this evening that I was not unduly modest in that hope of mine with the volume of information that you have supplied me this evening with enough material

for any organisation to work for quite a month. Therefore, sir, I thank you very much not only for giving me this opportunity of meeting such a galaxy of intellect and such a variety of citizenship as I find here this evening, but also listening to the words of wisdom which have come out from your mouth this *evening*. You have, sir, given numerous details of the defects in the working of the Government machinery, particularly the Import and Export Control section of the same. It is certainly beyond my power either to refuse all that you have said, or even to accept the charges that you have levelled against the working of those machineries. It requires investigation and I can say without any fear of contradiction or without any fear of being pulled up by my colleagues in the Federation that the cases, like the one which you have brought to my notice, I shall endeavour to take them up and see to what extent I can let my organisation be helpful to you in seeking solution of the difficulties which you have enumerated in your speech this evening. I nevertheless cannot help stating that in general the import and export control machinery of the Government does not work so arbitrarily as had been given out in the speech which you have made to-day.

Perhaps the ineffaceable impression, which the speech is bound to leave on the minds of those who have heard this evening, is that the machinery of the Government is in a perfectly chaotic condition, that they work arbitrarily without any set principles laid down either by themselves or by others for their guidance. Let me in all humility point out to you,

sir, that this is not the case. The Export Control is already assisted and guided by an Export Advisory Commission, which held on its membership people drawn from all parts of the country and from all sections of the trade, of course drawn in a manner which is democratic and which is acceptable or which is followed in all cases of election or in all cases where such a body is set up. They guide the export control machinery from time to time by laying down for its guidance certain set up rules. It is perfectly possible and it is quite probable indeed that the machinery while adhering to these principles makes mistakes. Everybody does! It is also quite probable that certain individuals who are in charge of the working of the machinery may make deliberate mistakes or do not come up to the standard of moral character, which is expected of those who are put in charge of the administration of any Government Department. It is true! It may be their human failings, but nevertheless the conduct of an individual or two, or may be a large percentage of individuals who are in charge of the administration of the machinery, will not justify either you or me, or any organisation, as a matter of that, to make a sweeping remark about the working of this machinery.

Coming to the Import Trade Control, sir, I am not in a position to give a certificate to this Department for doing all that is absolutely right and correct, because for the obvious reason I am not so much in the know of its working, you see, except in a general way. But I do surely make bold to state here, eventhough it might amount to

granting a certain individual – that the man, that the person – who, at the helm of affairs in the import trade control, is one, a person of great integrity, a person who can be relied upon to administer the department of course to the best of ability in a manner which is irreproachable. I say this because I myself had a very irritating experience at the hands of a certain gentleman. Not that I have had the occasion to be favoured by him, on the contrary I have had the occasion to be treated by him in a manner which should not in the normal course of conduct be considered courteous. My friend was entrusted in the manufacture of typewriters in Hindi. As such they had made the application for the import of various kinds of machinery and in the beginning to import certain typewriters which were badly needed by this country. I had the stupidity, I must own, it was a stupidity, because I reckon no individual, wherever he may be placed, could make a personal approach as far as possible, but I had the stupidity to appoach him only to find out where matters stood, and then when I went to him he did me the honour of receiving me for a few minutes, and when I asked him as to where matters stood, his only reply was 'you will hear about it in due course'. Not being satisfied with that rebuff, I went a step further and I asked that gentleman that my object in seeking that interview was to provide any information which he needed in order to determine the case. And he told me "thank you very much". But our questionnaire is so comprehensive, that we are able to collect all the material that is necessary to take a decision in the case. You can imagine the impression which

that interview left on my mind. I came back a thoroughly irritated person. But in a cooler moment, I realised that the gentleman took a course which was the only right course to be taken under the circumstances. Until this day I am full of appreciation for the gentleman, whom I considered lacked in common courtesy. One time I considered that, but to-day I am full of appreciation for him. Therefore, sir, I am to imagine that particular gentleman, I am speaking for him, the head of the Department, I am not speaking for the entire Department as such, that he shall tolerate, if he really can find it out, that there is any discrimination practised in his Department in the matter of granting of licences, discrimination between the North and the South, discrimination between people belonging to Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta and Madras, I must confess sir, that it gets beyond my comprehension. I may be wrong. Nevertheless, it is the part of the duty of the Chamber like the one, or the organisation like the one, to which I have the privilege to belong, to take up all these individual cases and see that justice is done, wherever justice is possible, or wherever justice had been denied, and I on behalf of the Federation can assure you, sir, that our entire organisation and our services shall be absolutely and completely at your disposal.

While saying this I may also point out to you that the mistakes or the weaknesses which you have pointed out are more or less inherent in controlled economy which this country is undergoing, or any scheme of controlled economy which this country is

undertaking, or anything of controlled economy on which the country had embarked at the moment. I had been repeating very often that the controls are not a natural step to be welcomed by people. Controls are fraught with danger, controls carry with them power to exercise some limitation on the liberty and the rights of the people, whether people voluntarily surrender those rights or those rights are taken away by the Government on account of the exigency of the situation. Therefore, any Government that imposes any kind of control must see that these unnatural measures are removed as fast as possible as soon as the normal or the semi-normal conditions are restored. I must also repeat here that I have said in the past on many an occasion that in the recent reimposition of control our Government has been more or less stampeded into action by factors which they were not in a position, or which they did not care to assist properly. I don't go into those factors. Speaking not in a complimentary manner of those who have influence over the Government, or those who were responsible for the Government in their decision, but now that the controls have been imposed, it becomes our bounden duty, we, who are engaged in trade, commerce and industry of this country, to make these controls a success.

While appealing to my brethren, I must also warn the Government that the levity, that the indifference with which they make sweeping remarks of all those engaged in mercantile pursuit is highly reprehensible. Even the other day, if some of you have read the speech made by one of the Honourable

Ministers of the Government – I am referring to the speech made by the Honourable Mr Gadgil – in which he said that the mercantile community made large profits by cooperating with the alien Government and they are now making profits by non-cooperating with the National Government when it has come into existence. I tried to convey to the Honourable Minister the folly of such utterances, but unfortunately I did not get cooperation from those in charge of the machinery which can serve as a proper vehicle for this sort of repudiation viz. the Press. I do not want to recall the services which the mercantile community rendered to the national cause at the time when we were all involved in life and death struggle against a foreign government. It is not up to me to point out the services rendered by the mercantile community, if I had the good courage even to mention the same – I am not speaking in my capacity as the President of the Federation, but I am speaking from my knowledge as a humble soldier who had marched in the army of those who were engaged in the task of setting the country free. As a common soldier the experience gained in that capacity, I say that the charges levelled by the Honourable Minister are, to say the least, not only ill-founded but the utterances indiscreet. It is only such indiscreet utterances that set the back of the people up and instead of inducing them to cooperate, induce them into a state of apathy and indifference, which is neither good for the community, nor good for the nation as a whole.

Having said this for the Government and for indiscreet critics of the conduct of those engaged in

private enterprise, I must make another appeal to my own brethren. The Government have recently enunciated their policy about the industrialisation of the country. It is true that in the past certain things have been done which have created a feeling of apprehension in the minds of those engaged in the industrial pursuit. It is also true that there have been a lack of coordination and cooperation between various wings of the Government. It is also true that the different sections of the Government have on many occasions been speaking with different voices which have created certain amount of confusion into the minds of the industrialists. But we have got to forget the past. The Government have now made it clear that they are out to assist those who want to help in the industrialisation of the country within limitations that are impossed by the demands of justice and fair play to all the communities in the country. Within those limitations the Government have made it abundantly clear that they will go all out to assist the setting up of new industries. Friends, it is time for us to take the Government at their word; it is time for us to place faith in their word; it is time for us to place faith in their statements. You must remember that we have got to-day at the head of the Indian Government those who have suffered with us, those who have spent their lifetime in the struggle for freedom, those who can claim a spotless character. We have got a galaxy of those talents and bright character, the like of which I can say without any danger of refutation, no nation, no country in the world can claim to-day (applause). Let us place our faith in the promises of such stalwarts, and let us assist the Government

in the industrialisation of the country. Of course, we do reserve our right to find fault for all the mistakes that they commit, to point out their mistakes, their short-comings and their weaknesses without any fear of treading on their toes, but our motto shall be and should be cooperation.

Mr Naidu, you have in the course of your speech referred to a subject on which I had been constantly harping during my entire tour, not only in this part of the country, but in other parts too, viz. demand from certain sections of the existing provinces to separate and be constituted into separate provinces. You have already heard from the leaders of the nation that this sort of propaganda is extremely ill-advised at the moment (hear, hear). Not only I have the desire to say ditto to what they have said, but I go a step further. I say that this separatist tendency must be nipped in the bud. If the Congress, whether it be working through the Commission which has been set up to define the boundaries of the existing provinces on a linguistic basis or whether it be through any other machinery, or the Government of the nation concedes that demand, we shall be sowing the seed of internal disruption. I warn all those to whom my feeble and humble voice reaches through you that for heavens, let us not encourage these centrifugal tendencies, let us not encourage this demand of numerous *Pakistans* in this country of ours. What the task before us is to harmonise the existing differences, not only the differences of languages, not only the so-called differences of culture - I do not believe in it - or even if it does exist, it shall

be and it should be our endeavour to harmonise them, to blend them, so as to evolve something common, something harmonious and something which may be worthy of a great nation, to which we have the honour to belong. Let us not prove to the world that the statement or the criticism, which our foreign rulers use to make before the Councils of the world that India is not a Nation, but a Sub-Continent and it is only the British rule that has kept them together. Let us in the course of our working so adjust our differences that we may be able to evolve a Nation unique in the world, if not unique in the world, the like of which exists in the other hemisphere, namely the United States of America. We have got all the requisite ingredients to turn us into a nation of that size and of all that grandeur. But surely the encouragement given to this sort of separatist tendency is hardly the way to achieve that objective. You have rightly raised the subject, sir, and let me add my feeble voice to the chorus of those who have raised their voice of protest against this sort of demand.

There is another tendency which is found prevalent in the country. We have in the past while fighting the British Government used certain slogans as our instrument to mobilise and to raise the spirit of the nation in fighting the alien rule. We have been apt to emphasise and perhaps to some degree over-emphasise the virtues of the eastern culture or of the age to which we in the past belonged. We have been frequently repeating from the platform that we are the inheritors of the glory of the past. It is true we are the inheritors of the

glory of the past, but that does not give us a right to shut our eyes to the present and to the future. We have often heard this phrase being repeated namely, that the West has a lot to learn from the East, that the counsels of the East shall prevail in the forum, or in the committees of the world. It is alright if we keep that ideal to work upon and to work for, but unfortunately I find that the repetition of these slogans induce us to shut our eyes to our own defects. We are apt to over-emphasise our own virtues and shut our eyes to our own defects; we get so engrossed in the various *isms* that we are very happy to borrow from the west, and yet we make no effort to so shape and mould our character which may really enable us to occupy that place of leadership which would rightly belong to us. We have got to realise that we must not fall into a state of complacency. Ours is a young nation. We are yet in the process of moulding. We have to so shape our character that we may perhaps, as pointed out, really achieve the ideal and the objective which we have as it appears, and in doing so in the pursuit of that ideal, great service can be rendered by the mercantile community. We must focus our own attention to ourselves. We must engage some sort of introspection and see what are our defects which hinder our path, which hinder our progress towards the path which we have set before ourselves. It is only when we purify ourselves, then we shall have the courage to tell our countrymen that here we are now fit and proper persons to be handed, to be assigned, the place of leadership. Therefore, friends, there is a lot to be done by the mercantile community in that direction and when we have

succeeded, then the efforts of all of you and me, who meet, would have borne some fruit.

I thank yon once again for the opportunity which you have given me for expressing my opinion.

Mr B. P. AGRAWALLA

Mr Naidu, Ladies and Gentlemen

As a member of the Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, I got an excellent opportunity to accompany our worthy President, Mr Mehrotra, on his South India tour. It has really given me great pleasure to be able to be present in your midst this evening which is a gathering of intellectuals of this City. I am particularly grateful to our kind host, Mr Naidu, for the very good reception he has been giving us from the time of our arrival in this City of yours.

Mr Naidu has raised many important points in his address of welcome to our President and I do not propose to contradict my host, but I would like to make a few submissions on my part and let me assure you, ladies and gentlemen, I will be very brief. Mr Naidu has raised the question that South India has been neglected by the Government as well as by the people. Now let us examine the things in that true perspective. Gentlemen, we know that the first Indian Governor-General has been drawn from South India (loud applause). You also know that Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar has been sent to present the case of India to the U. N. O. (applause).

Even during the period of the alien Government, Sir Shanmukham Chetti was elected to the highest office of the Presidency of the Indian Legistlative Assembly (loud applause). Even during the period of the alien Government, Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar and Sir Ramaswami Iyer were Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council (Applause). Sir C. V. Raman was drawn from South India who occupies the place of the biggest scientist of the country. Even in the present Government, Sir Shanmukham Chetti was taken as the Finance Minister, which is the most important portfolio. I need not repeat, gentlemen, or multiply the names and you know that South India has occupied a place of recognition in the eyes of the Government. But as I do not hold any brief to the Government, it is for the Government to answer the charges. But I know one thing and that is the brain of the Government of India is people from Madras. I am told that about seven thousand South Indians run the Government of India (loud applause), and the whole of the important key posts in the Government of India. Let me tell you that even the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce had Diwan Bahadur Ratnasabapathi Mudaliar and Kumara Raja Muthiah Chettiar of Chettinad as their Presidents. Of course, it may be said that the South did not get the due share and for which I do not want to put the blame of responsibility and for which you will have to work, and if you work in that direction nobody would be able to resist your claim which is quite legitimate.

As I have come to the South for the first time, I have found that South has immense potentialities

for industrial development - South has the education, South has the wisdom, South has the experience; what is required is to pull these different qualities together to harness them. Of course, it may be said that capital, which is the backbone of any industrial development, may not be as readily available in the South as in the other parts of the country, and there may not be big joint industries in in the South. But, friends, you can start with cottage industries and with small scale industries. South is fairly progressing so far as cottage industry is concerned and if you start the small industries on a very wide scale, these industries will produce enough wealth in time for the South to take up a larger and ever bigger industries. There cannot be wealth in the country, until and unless there is vast scale industrialisation. Of course, the enunciation of different policies and ideologies from the different Provincial and Central Ministers from time to time might have created some kind of misunderstanding in the minds of industrialists, but we know it as a fact that no country has been able to raise without the help of private enterprise and India cannot be an exception. If India has to rise as a great country in the eyes of the nations of the world the industrialists should be able to industrialise the country on a vast scale so that these industries can produce enormous wealth.

Coming to the question of the issue of the Import licences, I would like to say one thing for the information of our friends here. The Honourable Mr K. C. Neogy, Minister in charge of Commerce, is setting up an Import Advisory Council on which

the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has been given six seats. The President of our Federation had issued a directive that the representation to this Advisory Council should be drawn from all over India. It is now time for the South to rise to put up nominees in that Advisory Council so that the question of favouritism, or preferential treatment may not rise. But, if now the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the South will not put up their nominees, then automatically nominees from other parts of the country would be elected, and the South will go unrepresented. So, let South now rise and put up their nominees for being taken on that Import Advisory Council.

Our President has already spoken on the separatist mentality which is growing up in our country. Let me conclude my speech by saying only a few words on this. You are all aware, that the Congress, our great institution, accepted the principle of separate electorates about 30 years ago, and after that principle was accepted you have seen what has come. And to-day, we find that India has been divided into two parts. Let not the mistake be repeated again. Let us prove and prove to the world that we are Indians first and anything thereafter and if we are to prove that we are Indians first, we must have one Union. We should not have the separatist mentality. I can understand if the move comes for convenience of administration. For administrative convenience, you can have districts or sub-districts or provinces; you call them by any name but only for that purpose. But it would be a great mistake if we try to sub-divide

India on linguistic basis or any other basis excepting the administrative control or the administrative convenience.

Once again, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for the patient hearing you have given me and I also thank my host, Mr Naidu, for the very kind reception he has given us to-day.

Mr K. NANJUNDIAH

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For no sin excepting that of being in the first table, I have been drawn up before you; but, on this occasion to do the pleasant job of thanking the two guests from the North, who have enabled us to feel that we are one. Let me thank them, on your behalf. We always take their expectations of us, their promises to us and their visualising the whole country as one to be given effect to in actions in the future and, we hope, that if this visit has been fruitful in anything, it is in creating a faith of the South; that, in trade and commerce, just as it has been the lot of our Member for Mines to point out our privilege to participate on equal terms, viz., in administration and, to some extent, in quill driving as has been pointed out, because we are in the Secretariat, I hope they will associate us in Trade and Commerce as much they have done in these Secretariat jobs and in international gatherings. While, I am not one in active trade and commerce, to know where the shoe pinches, but enough instances have been brought to me that some amount

of confidence has yet to be restored. And, I hope, this occasion will prove that cementing factor.

May I, on your behalf, thank the guests who have so readily come over here and something more than that who have expounded their mentality of high commerce to us, laymen here.

May I thank you all for having responded to Mr Naidu's invitation.

I am not going to thank him, for he takes this as his hobby and he believes that entertaining us is his job. It will be out of place to thank him.

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